Vonn back on podium in super G

By USSA

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta – Just a day after leading a first-ever American podium sweep, Lindsey Vonn (Vail) on Sunday was back on the winner's stand, finishing second in the season-opening Audi FIS Ski World Cup super G in Lake Louise. Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) was sixth, while Lara Gut of Switzerland took the win and Tina Maze of Slovenia rounded out the podium.

Vonn, whose return to ski racing after a knee injury happened just on Friday, came in eighth that day before winning Saturday's downhill. Although she lamented her timing-based mistakes on the course, she said, "It was a solid day and a phenomenal weekend for me." This was Vonn's best super G finish since she won in St. Moritz in December 2012.

Mancuso had a solid run, sitting in fifth for 15 racers, until Cornelia Huetter from Austria bumped her to sixth place overall. Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) and Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) also scored World Cup points, finishing in 23 and 24, respectively. Katie Ryan (Aspen,) finished 42, Alice McKennis (Glenwood Springs, Colo.) 43, Jackie Wiles (Aurora, Ore.) 47 and Abby Ghent (Edwards, Colo.) 52.

The women's tour now heads to Are, Sweden, a replacement site from Courchevel, France, for a giant slalom and slalom. Vonn will remain at home in Vail to train, looking ahead to the next speed races the following weekend in Val d'Isere, snow permitting.

Science puts the squeeze on compression garments

By Teal Burrell, Outside

As tight as they are bright, compression socks, sleeves, shorts, and pants promise to boost performance and recovery. But scientists aren't entirely sure how – or if – compression gear works as advertised, questioning its usefulness in competition and recovery.

We might be better off, they say, lounging around in compression than we are racing in it.

There is moderate evidence to support wearing compression gear after a long race or workout. Jessica Hill, a sports scientist at St. Mary's University in Twickenham, England, tested the gear's effect on recovery in two groups of marathoners. When asked to hold a squat the day after the marathon – a formidable task – those who immediately and continuously donned compression leggings post-race (removing them only to shower) reported less quadriceps soreness compared to those in the control group. Hill also reviewed 12 studies examining compression gear and recovery.

The resulting data showed compression gear provided a modest reduction in soreness and muscle damage while restoring both leg strength and power, possibly by reducing inflammation.

"For an athlete who needs to do lots of training programmed quite closely together that could be an advantage," Hill says. For others, "The only benefit they're likely to get out of it is probably reduced soreness."

Read the whole story

U.S. women sweep Lake Louise downhill

By USSA

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta – Lindsey Vonn (Vail) reclaimed her title as Queen of the Downhill at Lake Louise on Saturday, winning her 60th Audi FIS Ski World Cup and capping a first-ever U.S. Ski Team podium sweep.

At the World Cup dubbed Lake Lindsey, she regained her crown as she pulled out the win by almost a half second. Early-running Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) took the lead and held it until Vonn bumped her into second. Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) rounded out the podium in third. It was the best finish in two seasons for all three athletes.

Out of her 60 career World Cup wins, 15 of Vonn's first places have come in Lake Louise and she did it again. Vonn looked fast and strong, keeping her speed up throughout the run and never losing the lead. When she crossed through the finish and looked up at the time, she let out a scream of excitement, thrilled to be back in action.

"Every day has gotten better here," Vonn said in the finish. "Today I went a little bit more aggressive than I did yesterday and took some more chances. I'm finally feeling confident going fast again."

It was the first ever all-American podium in alpine World Cup ski racing. It also marked four Americans in the top 10, with

Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) in sixth.

The rest of the Americans had to deal with a dark, snowy course, but had good results. Also coming back from multiple knee surgeries, Alice McKennis (Glenwood Springs, Colo.) took 18. Jackie Wiles (Aurora, Ore.) 37 and Katie Ryan (Aspen) 46. Julia Ford (Plymouth, N.H.) did not finish.

Teter holds on for third at Sprint Grand Prix

By USSA

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. – U.S. riders put on an impressive early season showing at the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix on Saturday, clinching five of the six podium spots.

Veteran Kelly Clark led an American sweep on the women's side, with Taylor Gold taking home top honors for the men.

This is the first year that FIS and the U.S Grand Prix tour have implemented a three run final and it proved to be the deciding factor for today's men's event. Second place finisher Yiwei Zhang's third run earned him a 95, putting the Chinese rider in the top spot with just three riders to drop, including Gold. Ben Ferguson, who was the top qualifier in the event, outdid his first two runs with a 94. But it was Gold's third run, complete with a frontside 1260, that would prove to be unbeatable. While these names are by no means new to the podium or the Olympic roster, it has been duly noted that the next breed of American male snowboarders has arrived on the

scene, including fifth place finisher Chase Josey and 15-year-old Jake Pates.

On the women's side, no one has as much competition experience as veteran Clark, which she continues to use to her advantage. Clark's first run proved to be enough to win the contest, but she continued to push herself and the sport adding an inverted frontside 720 to a run that already included a frontside 1080, a trick few other women have landed. Arielle Gold rose to the occasion, putting down a both a frontside and Cab 900 in her run.

Hannah Teter of Meyers, who struggled to land on her feet in runs one and two, stomped a classic Teter run with a perfectly executed backside 900 on her last hit to complete the American podium sweep.

"Today started off a little on the wrong note. I fell on nearly every practice run, so I decided to take a moment and get my stuff together. And thank goodness we had a third run because it all clicked on that third run," Teter said.

Spain's Queralt Castalet was absent from today finals after taking a hard fall in practice.

Pile burning scheduled for LT Basin

The Lake Valley Fire Protection District, California State Parks, Nevada Division of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service will continue prescribed fire operations near Sugar Pine Point

State Park, Pioneer Trail and Washoan Boulevard, Ski Run Boulevard near Heavenly, Luther Pass, Spooner Summit, and Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park in Slaughterhouse Canyon. Operations will last through the next several weeks as conditions allow.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size. The agencies coordinate with state and local county air pollution control districts and monitors weather conditions closely prior to prescribed fire ignition.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, the agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Strong opener for women's speed team

By USSA

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta – Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) led a solid effort by the U.S. Ski Team's women's speed squad on Dec. 5 that saw four athletes in the top nine, including Lindsey Vonn (Vail).

It was the strongest U.S. women's downhill team performance in two seasons.

Tina Maze of Slovenia took the win with Ross fourth, Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) seventh, Vonn eighth and Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) ninth. Ross missed the podium 0.03.

It was the first World Cup for Vonn in nearly a year. Her comeback a year ago was cut short by a re-injured knee forcing a second surgery. Vonn felt strong in training all week and was satisified with her start.

The women race a second downhill Saturday, with super G on Sunday.

Ganong in top 5 at Beaver Creek



Travis Ganong of Squaw places fifth Dec. 5 in Beaver Creek. Photo/Cody Downard/USSA

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK – It was a huge day Dec. 5 for the Americans in Beaver Creek, with Steven Nyman pulling off a third place podium finish and Travis Ganong of Squaw Valley grabbing fifth place. Kjetil Jansrud of Norway, who won the super G and downhill in Lake Louise last week, took another win and Beat

Feuz of Switzerland finished second.

The notoriously well-prepped Audi Birds of Prey course looked fast Friday, with light snow falling in the early morning, but clearing in time for the first run.

Seven Americans ran the downhill. Ted Ligety (Park City) finished in 28, Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) in 30, Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) in 38, Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) in 40, Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) in 52 and Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) in 53.

But the story of the day was Nyman, who was in first place for 15 racers and finished in third after an incredible run.

“It’s huge to be on the podium today, especially with 2015 [World Championships] coming up,” relayed Nyman. “I woke up this morning and wasn’t that confident. I had to talk to myself and say ‘OK, this is your opportunity.’”

“Once you get that momentum, it’s hard to stop. I’m hoping I snowball it in,” said Ganong. “I’ve actually been top 10 at every race since Kitzbuhel last year, so I’ve had good consistency there. Hopefully, I can step on top of the podium a couple times this year.”

Wise dominates at Grand Prix

By USSA

A heated early season battle went down Dec. 5 at the first stop of the Sprint U.S Grand Prix tour in Copper Mountain, Colo., with Olympic Champion David Wise of Reno and New

Zealander Janina Kuzma taking home top honors.

The new three run, best run counts format gave today's finalist a lot of opportunity for progression, but Wise's consistent skiing and back-to-back double cork prowess set the stage early in the game. Wise won the contest with his first run of the day in which he linked right and left double cork 1260s.

Second and third place finishers Torin Yater-Wallace and Benoit Valentin favored the three run format, mixing up their tricks and upping their scores as the day progressed. Alex Ferierra and current AFP World Champion Kevin Rolland finished just off the podium in fourth and fifth, respectively. U.S. Freeskiing teammates Gus Kenworthy and Aaron Blunk rounded out the top seven.

Progression was the name of the game on the women's side as well, with Kiwi skier Janina Kuzma landing her first 900 in competition and simultaneously landing herself on the top of the podium. Olympic slopestyle silver medalist Devin Logan nabbed second place with her stellar first run combo of a left 720 mute to switch alley-oop 540. Olympic halfpipe silver medalist from Japan Ayana Onozuka walked away with third place just edging out American Annalisa Drew.

Mancuso makes a name for herself as big-wave surfer

By Grant Davis, Outside

Weeks before the start of the World Cup ski racing season, Julia Mancuso decided to go surfing. That's not so unusual – Mancuso has long surfed from her off-season base in Maui.

This time, however, the Squaw Valley ski racer chose to try the thunderous wave Cloudbreak in Fiji, using a tow-in assist from a jet ski to notch four rides on the double-head-high swell.

The photos of her session show her charging down the face of a beastly wave with all the poise of the veteran ski racer she is.

We caught up with the four-time Olympic medalist to ask how surfing big waves helps her ski – and if she sees any future in the water.

Read the whole story

Prizes for coyote hunting banned by Calif. panel

By Angel Jennings, Los Angeles Times

California Fish and Game officials vote to prohibit contests for hunting coyotes and other nongame animals
The California Fish and Game Commission voted Wednesday to ban hunting contests that award prizes for nongame animals such as coyotes, beavers and bobcats.

In a 4-1 vote, the commission prohibited "giving inducements of any kind" in hunting contests for "nongame species and fur-bearing animals," said Clark Blanchard, a Fish and Game spokesman. The ban will put an end to organized coyote hunts

in rural parts of California that awarded up to $500 and other gifts to top hunters.

The ban is expected to take effect in early 2015.

Read the whole story